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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 2, 4-12, and 14-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Applicant AMENDS the specification and claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 18, and 19 and CANCELS claims 3, 13, and 20.

Applicant greatly appreciates the Examiner's indication that claim 13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Examiner objected to the Specification for allegedly containing minor informalities. Applicant has amended the Specification to correct the minor informalities noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the Specification.

The Examiner objected to claims 6, 7, and 9 for allegedly containing minor informalities. Applicant has amended claims 6, 7, and 9 to correct the minor informalities noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claims 6, 7, and 9.

Claims 1, 18, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as allegedly being indefinite. Claims 1, 18, and 19 have been amended to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 18, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-12, and 14-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Niibe et al. (JP 2001-101593). Claims 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niibe et al. in view of Obradovich et al. (U.S. 2003/0004616). Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niibe et al. in view of Ogawara (JP 2003-255340). Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niibe et al. in view of Araki (JP 07-172214).

Applicant has amended each of independent claims 1, 18, and 19 to recite all of the features of allowable claim 13 and intermediate claim 3, canceled claims 3 and 13, and amended claim 4 to depend from claim 1.

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Accordingly, each of the rejections of claims 1, 3, 4, 6-12, and 14-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Niibe et al., claims 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niibe et al. in view of Obradovich et al., claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niibe et al. in view of Ogawara, and claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niibe et al. in view of Araki are now moot.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1353.

Respectfully submitted,

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